



## Mars Sale

A U.S. TV writer has registered a legal claim to the planet Mars.

Richard Griffing, of Mesa, Arizona, is planning the biggest resort development scheme of the 21st century called "Mars - a Planned Community". It will include an \$80 million hockey arena and greyhound race park. The development of the resort-city, called Ralphsburg, will start in the year 2024 near the Martian equator.

He has banned mobile homes because of the 600km an hour surface winds. There will be no restrictions on race, creed or religion, but for some undisclosed reason, he has banned TV evangelists.

Griffing has an official document - signed and numbered - from the Maricopa County Registrars Office in Arizona to prove his title.

He says he has already sold almost 100 square kilometres of land at Ralphsburg. "If the deed is disputed there will be no refunds," he added.

The entrepreneur-philosopher declared, "No Earth government can own land. A constitution will govern the laws of the planet."

The Martian constitutional convention will probably take place some time in 1992.

## Swords into Ploughshares

A meeting of the Supreme Soviet in Moscow announced that the Soviet factories where the scrapped SS-20 Medium range missiles were built would be stripped of their military purpose. From now on these plants will manufacture baby carriages, bicycles, washing machines and refrigerators, according to the Soviets.



## You Take the High Road

A Scottish university team has unearthed evidence from the bottom of a lake showing that the Scots grew cannabis 700 years ago.

Cannabis pollen was found under the peat bed of Loch Kilconquhar in Eastern Scotland, dated to the 12th and 13th centuries.

Dr Graeme Whittington, a geography lecturer, said he did not know what the plants were used for in ancient Scotland.



## Blessed Are The Cheesemakers

The town of Jarle, which is about 200 kilometres west of Stockholm, has used a little-known statute to declare war on France in protest against nuclear testing in the Pacific.

The Swedish statute, promulgated in 1642, allows towns to make unilateral declarations of war against any nation.

The Mayor Jarle, Mr Elof Elinder, is a staunch anti-nuclear campaigner. He urges all Swedes to boycott French goods, especially wine and cheese.

The Twilite Zone urges all Australasians to do likewise.

## Toilet-Computer Interfaces

The Japanese are leading the world in medical technology with the invention of the computerized toilet.

The invention, called "intelligent toilet first-thing-in-the-morning," provides sitters with a computer readout of their heart rate, blood pressure and temperature. The intelligent toilet can also do a urine analysis and transmit the data to doctors with compatible computers.

## Anonymity

Halima Badkuf, 70, of the seaside village of Tizgirt in Algeria, was refused a war veteran widow's pension because photographers were unable to get a picture of her.

Algeria's official news agency APS reported that in all attempts to photograph her, including group pictures, the space she occupies is always replaced by a dark mist.

Sorry we can't bring you a picture.



## Voting With Their Feet

The Prime Minister of Canada, Mr Clark, arrived by hovercraft at the Canadian Open Sandcastle Competition but he proved to be too popular.

As soon as he stepped off the hovercraft, the crowd surged forward, trampling most of the exhibits in the rush. One of the finest sand models destroyed was that of the Canadian parliament buildings, which had taken 27 hours to build.

Alderman Joan Warbridge, chairperson of the competition, had to award the first prize to the man who built a model of the White Rock lunatic asylum.

# Solar Bees

The US Department of Agriculture, concerned about an invasion of killer bees over the Texas border sometime next year, has commissioned Martin Marietta, the makers of the MX missile, to fit the bees with miniature tracking computer chips.

The tiny chips, powered by nine solar cells, are no bigger than a grain of salt.

The most difficult part for Martin Marietta was holding the bee still while the chip was glued to its belly in precisely the right position.

The chips will transmit infra-red signals that can be picked up by a ground station over a kilometre away.

The Dept of Agriculture hopes that by tracking thousands of killer bees they may discover a way to control them without using pesticides.



## NERVOUS DISORDER

A pain-crazed patient went berserk when London dentist Ian Galliford touched a raw nerve. Tom Pickering, 38, leapt from the chair, punched the dentist and attacked his partner and receptionist, finally stabbing Mr Galliford with a screwdriver. When police arrived Pickering knocked out a constable and officers had to use truncheons to subdue him.

Mr Pickering, a former complaints officer with Norfolk County Council, was taken to a mental hospital and detained under the Mental Health Act.



## Severed Heads 1

American neurosurgeon Dr Robert White, who transplanted a monkey's head onto another body in 1971, is now suggesting the transplantation of human brains.

"According to my beliefs, the being is contained in the brain. The spirit is in the cortex, with memory, thoughts, feelings, intellectual capacities, sentiments, personality, faith. A cephalic transplant would be, to my way of thinking, the transfer and the survival of consciousness."

Dr White works at the Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine in Cleveland, Ohio. Dr White is a practising Catholic who believes that brain transplants enable the soul to be grafted. His latest research involves cooling the brain.

Meanwhile, 35-year-old St Louis attorney Chat Fleming has acquired a patent which describes a machine to keep severed animal and human heads alive. He did so to prevent anyone from building the machine without full public debate.

Dr Jerry Silver, a co-worker with Dr White and expert in regrowing severed nerves, said; "I think it is fairly barbaric at this point. I do not even see that 100 years from now it is a possibility. If anybody did that today, it would be absolutely horrible. Can you imagine looking around the room, and you're just a head?"

The longest surviving Case Western head transplant monkey lived only 36 hours.

## Severed Heads 2

Riverside County Coroner's Court has ruled that the death of an 83-year-old woman, whose head was preserved by a cryonics lab, was homicide.

The Alcor Life Extension Foundation acknowledged it had injected a barbiturate into her body and had then severed and frozen her head, in the hope that science would one day be able to reanimate her with a new body.

## WAITING ON THE BLESSED VIRGIN



## Blinding Visions

Eye doctors in Pescara, Italy treated nearly 250 locals for eye lesions or damaged corneas after an expected sign in the sky failed to appear.

More than 20,000 people converged on a hill just outside Pescara in March to look at the Sun after a woman said the Virgin Mary told her a miracle would appear near the Sun around noon.

Some said they saw the Sun vibrate and turn green.

## Self-Destruct Video Company

The Polaroid Corporation in America has applied for a patent on a videotape which is designed to self-destruct after a number of viewings. Polaroid claims this inferior self-destruct videotape will bring videotape prices down.

Albert Conti, manager of Polaroid's New Business Development Group, told *Variety* magazine that the new tape would mean video stores could stock more copies of popular titles.

Video store owners reacted hysterically, accusing the company of greed.

Polaroid has refused to say how the mechanism works but it may employ a signal which automatically erases the tape after a predetermined number of plays.

## The Modern Hunter

The people of Barberville, Florida, have passed a law banning the consumption of dead animals found on roadways. The ordinance has been passed specifically against an aged pensioner, Rachel Jackson, to prevent her from dining on squashed dogs, cats, rattlesnakes and armadillos.

Ms Jackson protested that she needed them to eke out her food budget. "I only ever eat freshly killed animals," she said. "These people are forcing me to become a vegetarian."